3i Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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SANTAL PARGANAS

So to preserve the decorum of the village during *Bitlahà*, custom lays it down that if the Headman of a village which is to be publicly disgraced thus, receives the mass of Santals with a pot of water as a token of penance, they will desist from singing the obscene songs and will carry out the rest of the programme.

What is dangerous for the State is that during a *Bitlahà*, mass tribal movements are seen throughout the Santal Parganas. Sometimes the infuriated mobs commit excesses of various kinds and many such cases roll into the courts. Again, there are times when the Santal takes it into his head to commit *Bitlahà* on non-Santals. Now, speaking in terms of Santal customary law, non-Santals are beyond their pale, but who can stop the Santal when his passion has been roused? He does not listen to arguments and several years ago the authorities had to quell a disturbance at the Godda subdivision of the Santal Parganas, where tens of thousands of Santals had assembled to lead a *Bitlahà* against some offending non-Santal residents. Our picture of a tribal ferment during a contemplated social ostracism is not at all an exaggerated one. It created so great a flutter that Santals from Monghyr, Bhagalpur and even Rajmahal marched on to join the movement at Godda.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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At Mayurbhanj

684 184 [579] Our enquiries at Mayurbhanj revealed the existence of this institution, the only difference being that no general unrest was reported within recent memory attending the execution of the tribal punishment, so as to endanger the peace of the land.

692 623 634 684 Here also the parties adduce evidence before the *Panchayet*, and more serious cases are referred to the inter-village council and thence, if necessary, to the Supreme Court during the tribal hunt or the parliament at *Mòkòrbasi*.

684 783 [346] The special feature of the Mayurbhanj programme includes installation of a *càndàl* (a temple-like structure made of *Sal* wood) in which straw or mud images of the delinquents are placed, whereas their clothes are hung outside. Then amidst music and beat of drums the ceremony of penance is performed.

Restoration to the Tribal fold

The men who are thus excommunicated are prohibited from any social intercourse with the others as dining and getting their children married. Thus harassed by the villagers, the boycotted persons sometimes leave the village to save themselves and their progeny from ignominy. The position of those who were outcasted for having sexual connexion with people of other races is the worst, for they are

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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224 was a regular feature in old times but now it is organised more or less for the relaxation of state guests or when a wild animal troubles the people.

Deshua Sendra (Disom Gipitic' Sendra)[1].

[634] The date of this annual hunt is fixed by the Parganas of the hilly areas where the tribal excursion is made in the month of *Chaitra* or *Baisakh* (April—May). The information is sent round by means of
224 202 211 a knotted string called *Girà gaṭh* conveyed by the Santals.

The *modus operandi* of this information may be thus explained. Supposing a string with fifteen knots reaches the village X, the villagers will unloose a knot. When it reaches the village Y, it means that fourteen days remain for the hunt taking place. The messenger carrying the notice is changed there and another takes his place. It is his duty to inform the place of *Gipitic'*, e.g. where the tribe would rest after the hunt.

224 782 [634] [793] The preliminaries regarding which portions of the jungle would be beaten by the people of particular *mouzas* (areas) being fixed by the Parganas in consultation with the tribe, the *Dihri* of the area offers pujas to the presiding deity of the hill.

[178] [579] [211] 1 This hunt has been stopped since 1916 when a mêlée took place in Mayurbhanj, so the information sent round by a string full of knots cannot now be legally circulated.